

Montgomery Public Schools  
Office of Operations  
Security Department

MEMORANDUM

To : File

From : E.R. Crew, *E.R. Crew*  
Internal Investigator

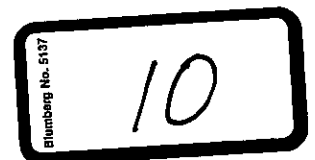
Date : Monday, February 25, 2002

Subject : Investigation Involving Melvin Lowe, Teacher at  
Southlawn Middle School

On Wednesday, February 20, 2002, I was instructed by Ron Smith, Director of Security, to meet a police officer at Southlawn Middle School in regard to a complaint involving Mr. Melvin Lowe. Mr. Smith further advised that Mr. Lowe had been accused of injuring a student by shoving the student against a wall on Friday, February 15, 2002. Mr. Smith added that the Principal, Tina Minott, had received a telephone call from an attorney representing the student.

Upon arrival at Southlawn Middle School I met the Principal, Mrs. Minott. She advised that earlier in the day she had received a call from Mr. Maurice Bell, Attorney for Deangelo King, a 6<sup>th</sup> grade student at the school. She stated that Deangelo had told her that he was pushed into a wall by Mr. Lowe on Friday, February 15, 2001. She further stated that the family was present and wanted to charge Mr. Lowe with Assault.

I was met a few minutes later at the school by Officer K.C. Miliner, Montgomery Police Department. After making Officer Miliner aware of the complaint, he interviewed Deangelo in the Security Office. Deangelo told Miliner that on the preceeding Friday, 2-15-02, Mr. Lowe was upset with him during first period because he did not have the correct pen to complete an exercise in class. He stated that sometime between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> period, Mr. Lowe took him outside the room and they began to walk toward the office. He stated that Lowe turned around and walked back toward his classroom. At this point according to Deangelo, Mr. Lowe began to get on to him in the hallway, and shoved him into the wall. A few seconds later he and Mr. Lowe returned to the classroom.



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Deangelo stated further that on the same day he told Mr. Lewis, and Mrs. Duncan, both teachers, what had happened. He added that Ms. Duncan took him in the hall and looked at his back and told him that it was just a muscle problem and that he would be alright. He stated that his back began to hurt over the week-end and his mother took him to the Emergency Room at Jackson Hospital. He stated that he was told by the physician there that he had a contusion and to take Aleve. During this interview I asked Deangelo what Mr. Lowe told him when they exited the classroom. He stated that Mr. Lowe told him "let's go down the hall ". I asked him if he thought they were going to the office and he stated that he didn't know. He added that "sometimes Mr. Lowe takes kids to the Retract office to paddle them".

After talking with Deangelo, I went to Ms. Minott's office and learned that on Sunday, February 17, 2002, she received a call at home from Mrs. Duncan. She stated that Ms. Duncan told her about Deangelo's version of the incident. She also stated that after she received a call from the lawyer representing Deangelo, she attempted to retrieve the incident from the security camera system. I was able to pull up the camera in the hallway where Mr. Lowe's door is located. At 8:58 a.m. on the tape, I observed an adult male and a juvenile male walk into the hallway at the far end of the hall, exit the fire doors and immediately walk back into the hallway near Mr. Lowe's classroom door. The adult male is then observed standing over the juvenile male, who is backed up against the wall. Because of the distance away from the camera it is not possible to identify the subjects. Because the tape records every 3 seconds or so, you are not able to ascertain how the juvenile wound up against the wall.

Officer Miliner attempted to interview Mr. Lowe while I was talking with Ms. Minott. Mr. Lowe was advised of his rights and advised Miliner that he did not wish to give a statement. He then left the building.

At approximately 3:55 p.m. on the same date, Wednesday, February 20, 2002, Officer Miliner and I met with the mother and grandparents of Deangelo in a conference room in the school office. Deangelo's mother, Tina King, indicated her strong desire to press charges against Mr. Lowe. Officer Miliner persuaded Ms. King to wait until the next day, Thursday, 2-21-02, so that the matter could be investigated further.

On Thursday, 2-21-02, I went to the school and learned that Mr. Lowe did not come to work. I interviewed a teacher, Ms. Adrian Cyrus, whom I had seen walk by on the tape while the adult and juvenile were standing outside Mr. Lowe's door. Ms. Cyrus stated that she did not remember anything out of the ordinary from Friday morning. She stated that teachers are always fussing at students, telling them to get

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in line, pull their pants up, etc. I asked her if she would remember seeing a teacher really getting into a student's face and she replied "probably not".

I then interviewed Pedro Lewis, who teaches in the classroom next to Mr. Lowe. Mr. Lewis stated that he has Deangelo second period, just after he leaves Mr. Lowe's class. He stated that sometime during first period he heard Mr. Lowe getting onto Deangelo in the hallway. He stated that he asked Deangelo what had happened and he stated that Deangelo told him that Mr. Lowe had "slung him against the wall" because he didn't have a pen. Mr. Lewis denied Deangelo mentioning to him that his back was hurting. He stated that Deangelo did not ask him to go to the office to call his mother. I asked Lewis what he remembered Mr. Lowe say in the hallway and he replied that he heard Lowe tell Deangelo to "come on down the hall". He stated that this was said in a loud tone of voice.

I then talked with Ms. Jeanette Duncan, the teacher that Deangelo stated that he reported his injury to. Ms. Duncan stated that on Friday, 2-15-02, during 3<sup>rd</sup> period she noticed Deangelo frowning, and asked him what was wrong. He replied that his back was hurting. She then asked him how he had hurt his back and he replied "Mr. Lowe slung me up against the wall". She stated that Deangelo wanted to use the phone to call his mother. She stated that she then looked at his back and stated that she saw no discoloration or swelling. Deangelo then asked her if she thought he needed x-rays and she replied that it was probably just bumped hard. She stated that at about 2:35 p.m. that date Deangelo asked her if he should tell his mother what had happened and she told him to do what he felt like he needed to do.

Ms. Duncan stated that after school she attempted to find Ms. Minott to tell her about the incident but was unable to do so. She stated that she called Ms. Minott at home on Friday night and left a message on her machine. She stated that Ms. Minott called her back on Saturday and she reported to her what had happened. Ms. Duncan added that Monday, 2-18-02, was an in-service day, and when the students returned on Tuesday, 2-19-02, she asked Deangelo how he was doing. She stated that he told her that he had been to the doctor.

Also, on Thursday, 2-21-02, I interviewed the Retract Teacher, Richard Tyrone Edwards, in Ms. Minott's office. He stated that he was not aware of Mr. Lowe ever paddling any students in his office. I asked him if he had ever paddled any students without the principal being aware of it, and he replied that he had. He went on to say that on 2-3 occasions he had paddled students in the bandroom. He stated that he did not check with Ms. Minott, and he did not check the student's registration cards prior to administering the punishment.

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Later in the day on Thursday, 2-21-02, Ms. King was allowed to sign a warrant on Mr. Lowe for Harassment. Officer Miliner allowed Mr. Lowe to turn himself in at the City Jail.

On Friday, 2-22-02, I met briefly with Mr. Lowe in Assistant Superintendent Barker's office. He denied striking or assaulting Deangelo. He also denied ever administering corporal punishment to Deangelo or any other student at the school.

At this point the following facts are apparent: (1) enough of Deangelo's story has been validated to make the police feel that he was probably physically harassed by Mr. Lowe; (2) two teachers knew of the allegation against Mr. Lowe on the same day that it happened, but did not report it that day; (3) the principal became aware of the allegation during the week-end but did not report it until Wednesday, 2-20-02; (4) another teacher, not involved in this matter, admitted to administering corporal punishment without letting the principal know.